



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Carers

Education and Training Strategy



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1. Context

Family carers provide unpaid care and support to family members and friends who have a disability, mental illness, chronic medical condition, terminal illness or are frail aged. There are 484,400ⁱⁱⁱ carers living in Queensland.

Carers Queensland Inc. is the peak body representing the diverse concerns, needs and interests of carers in Queensland. Carers Queensland believes that all carers regardless of their age, disability, gender identification, sexuality, religion, socioeconomic status, geographical location or their cultural and linguistic differences should have the same rights, choices and opportunities and be able to enjoy optimum health, social and economic wellbeing and participate in family and community life, employment and education like other citizens of the State. Carers Queensland's mission is to improve the quality of life of all carers throughout Queensland.

Carers Queensland recognises and values the knowledge, skills and experiences that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples bring to the organisation as part of an abiding commitment to honour its responsibilities both to its own community and to the wider communities with which we interact.

The Senior Management Group of Carers Queensland first began discussions around undertaking the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) process in late 2012. It was felt it was crucial for us to embark on this journey as the Senior Management Group could see the clear benefits and opportunities in undertaking such a commitment. Our organisation's values are intrinsically linked to the values of human rights for everyone

The Board of Governance approved the development of the RAP in February 2013.

One of the key components of the RAP is to produce a culturally inclusive strategy around our accredited and non-accredited education and training programs that gives the opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers to engage. Particularly in the area of accredited training where a recognised qualification could open the doors to getting those carers into employment and/or going on to further study.

Consultation with internal and external stakeholders has been influential in producing this strategy. Carers Queensland is working hard to forge new and meaningful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education



and training providers, other service providers, community organisations and carers.

The purpose of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Training Strategy therefore is to establish Carers Queensland's priorities and plans for delivering training to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island family carers throughout all metropolitan and regional areas in which Carers Queensland operates.



2. Commitment

The Education and Training Team is closely aligned with the RAP and all of the overarching principles. We are embedding the key areas of Respect, Relationships and Opportunities into all the work we do across our planning and service delivery.

Our commitment is to:-

- Improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers through accredited and non-accredited education and training opportunities
- Ensure that all education and training staff have mandatory cultural competence training that is ongoing to fully understand the issues and challenges of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- Respect the diversity and unique situations of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- Acknowledge the challenges and previous barriers to education and training
- Partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education providers through meaningful consultation and a genuine will to improve outcomes for carers
- Customise our training materials where necessary to ensure they are inclusive and culturally appropriate for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- Customise our training delivery where necessary to ensure they are inclusive and culturally appropriate for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- Value the different perspectives and knowledge from all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers
- Observe all protocols and adhere to our policies and procedures in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers



3. Priorities

There are eight (8) key areas the RTO will address as part of this strategy and an operational plan has been developed to underpin it. This operational plan will be scrutinised by the RAP Working Group and the industry reference group that oversees the work of the RTO.

3.1 Improve networking

Sharing ideas and learning from others experienced in the education and training arena is crucial to the development of the RTO and thus the outcomes for carers. Carers Queensland will improve its networking both internally and externally with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers, communities and service providers to identify the particular accredited and non-accredited training needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. We will identify, establish contact and build relationships with other education providers that have a strong focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and will learn from them.

Carers Queensland will also seek Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation to sit on its state-wide industry Education, Training and Employment reference group that oversees the work of the RTO and ensures it meets its objectives. This will include representatives from both education and employment backgrounds.

It is important to market ourselves well in a fast changing and competitive environment. Carers Queensland will promote all its training courses and workshops on the Carers Queensland website as well as through our regional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander networks including social and media outlets.

3.2 Awareness of Diversity in the Classroom

Carers Queensland will ensure that it does an Acknowledgement of Country before each training session as a mark not only of respect but to also acknowledge the different cultures within the community. We need to have a good understanding of where our carers are from and what is important to them if we are to educate them to the best of our ability.

Carers Queensland will establish who the Traditional Owners and Elders are in each of the regions we train in and will identify the local



protocols for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in those regions.

3.3 Community Consultation and Partnerships

We are aware that the best chances of success for our students are if we consult widely and partner with those agencies that already have the expertise and knowledge of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Carers Queensland's education and training staff will seek ongoing guidance from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators and services in the development of our education programs and will identify relevant organisations, and form collaborative, effective partnerships so that we can deliver courses and workshops that are relevant and driven by the community.

3.4 Cultural Integrity

We acknowledge that different cultures have different protocols and traditions. All education and training staff will receive professional development and ongoing cultural competency training in order to better understand the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. We commit to attending education and training conferences/seminars that have a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' learning.

Carers Queensland will ensure that cultural integrity is part of the orientation process for all students regardless of their culture and background by including cultural discussion as part of the orientation process for all learners.

An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy will be developed to help with recruitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to the RTO.

Carers Queensland will ensure induction for all staff raises awareness of issues around cultural integrity and that they are fully informed with regard to the organisation's Reconciliation Action Plan and its objectives.



3.5 Culturally Appropriate Training Delivery and Assessment

In order to provide education and training opportunities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers, we need to ensure that all our workshops, courses and information sessions are relevant, meaningful and accessible with every effort made to assist those carers through the initial application process, including personalised learning plans, and ongoing support.

Training will be designed and presented to provide delivery options that suit particular learning groups and the individuals within it. Carers Queensland will customise its training and workshops materials to be more accessible and culturally appropriate as well as tailoring our methods of service delivery to give as much flexibility as possible. We will also identify any cultural issues in relation to planning, learning and assessment.

Carers Queensland will undertake an initial interview and develop a personalised learning plan with all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students that are trained through the RTO.

Carers Queensland will ensure the RTO has a flexible delivery policy in its policy and procedures manual and student handbook.

In order to help increase both the cultural competence of carers, and the community sector in which we train, Carers Queensland will implement the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elective as part of the Cert III in Community Services Work and partner with appropriate educators who will deliver the training.

Carers Queensland will provide mentors if appropriate from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to help support those carers studying with the RTO.

3.6 Language and Literacy Issues

Staff will help to raise expectations by removing some of the existing barriers such as low language, numeracy and literacy skills which will be identified through a comprehensive initial assessment by education and training staff. Students who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander will not be discriminated against if their LLN skills sets are not sufficient, but will be provided with support to improve them.



Carers Queensland will ensure training is presented clearly, allowing for clarification and discussion with ongoing support if necessary.

3.7 Student Services

Carers Queensland will refer Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who have any other needs to appropriate pathways (with their written consent), including referral to other programs and services, both external and internal, to increase support and aid wellbeing. This may include support to assist with health, counselling, transport, finance, and advocacy.

Carers Queensland will provide pre-employment training workshops to support those students in getting back into the workplace. These workshops will include sessions on completing resume writing, job applications, job search skills, interview skills, self-esteem and confidence building and dress for success.

3.8 Input into Decision Making

It is crucial for Carers Queensland that everything we do is inclusive and therefore we actively encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to not only be part of our planning process, but too also collect feedback from them to aid with continuous improvement.

Carers Queensland will ensure that evaluation is carried out after each workshop, elective etc. and that the information collated will be added to our Continuous Improvement Register.



4. Monitoring and Reporting

Carers Queensland will monitor and record:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and training data across Carers Queensland including attendance, levels of attainment and attrition rates.

Carers Queensland's Senior Management Group has the day to day responsibility to implement, advise on and monitor the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Education and Training Strategy. The Senior Management Group meets monthly and will undertake quarterly reviews of this Strategy.

An Impact Measurement Questionnaire will be carried out by the Chair of the RAP Working Group to assess performance and submitted annually to Reconciliation Australia. This report will be provided to the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group and, through the Chief Executive Officer, to the Board of Governance of Carers Queensland.

The Impact Measurement Questionnaire will monitor our performance in the key areas of Respect, Relationship and Opportunities using both qualitative and quantitative data. In relation to the RTO, we will be assessed specifically on the following:-

Relationships

- Did the RTO commit to forming a Working Group, comprising both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians?
- Did the RTO commit to consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations/communities/people?
- Did the RTO commit to ongoing consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff within the organisation?

Respect

- Did the RTO commit to practise Acknowledgement of Country?
- Did the RTO commit to promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture?



Opportunities

- Did the organisation commit to provide pre-employment training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?
 - Did the organisation commit to provide direct mentoring or support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students?
 - Did the organisation commit to improve the provision of its services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customers/clients?
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